March 2, 2006

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Layton R. McCurdy, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Vermelle Johnson, Chairman, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing, and Members

Consideration of Annual Evaluation of Associate Degree Programs FY 2003-2004

Background

The South Carolina 1979 Master Plan requires the annual review of associate degrees in the State's public higher education institutions. In 1996, the passage of Act 359 underscored the importance of program accountability by focusing on questions related to time to degree and graduates' first-time passing rates on professional licensure examinations. The purposes of this annual review remained unchanged by Act 359. Those purposes have been and remain 1) to insure that programs demonstrate responsiveness to employment trends and meet minimum standards of enrollment, graduation, and placement; and 2) to identify programs which need to be strengthened.

The procedures for this review require each program's productivity to be evaluated in terms of enrollment, number of graduates, and percent of graduates placed in a related job or continuing their studies full-time. The following criteria apply:

1. Each program must produce at least six graduates during the evaluation year or an average of at least six graduates over the most recent three-year period.

2. At the most recent fall term, each program must enroll at least 16 students who generate 12 full-time equivalents.

3. At least 50 percent of the graduates available for job placement must be placed in a job related to their education or continue their education on a full-time basis.

Programs which fail to meet the above criteria must be canceled, suspended, or put on probation unless their continuation is justified to the Commission. Justification for programs may take into consideration such factors as manpower requirements, funding, and employment "stop outs" of students. In addition, three programs—General Technology, Vocational Technical Education, and General Engineering Technology—have historically had different and much more flexible standards of evaluation, because of the unique needs they have filled and the low enrollments which they were expected to produce.

When a program is placed on probation, the institution may continue to offer the program but must provide a plan for the program to meet all criteria within three years. Suspension means that the program's inability to meet the minimum criteria is serious enough to discontinue temporarily the enrollment of new students in the program until the institution can study the need and demand for the program. A program may remain on suspension for three years.

Programs such as General Technology, Vocational Technical Education, and General Engineering Technology have historically been considered "justified" for continuation regardless of whether they met the evaluation requirements.

Distribution of Associate Degree Programs by System and Sector

For this reporting period, associate degree programs exist in the sixteen technical colleges, the four two-year regional branches of the University of South Carolina, and the four four-year campuses of the University of South Carolina. Although the four-year regional campuses of the University of South Carolina at Aiken, Upstate, and Beaufort were pledged two years ago to discontinue the offering of all associate degree programs not later than academic year 2005-2006, because of an agreement brokered by the Commission on Higher Education, USC-Beaufort has been permitted to continue to offer the associate of arts/associate of science degree program at the military bases in Beaufort, owing to a request from the military leadership in the Beaufort area. All other associate degrees in public institutions of higher education in the state are, however, now only offered in two-year institutions with the sole exception of the AA/AS at Fort Jackson offered by USC-Columbia.

The associate degree programs in the State's public institutions were evaluated using Fall 2004 enrollment data and academic year 2003-2004 graduation and employment data. Seven associate degree programs in the two-year USC campuses, four associate degree programs in the four-year USC campuses, and 303 associate degree

programs in the technical college system were evaluated. The four associate degree programs which were still in 2003-2004 offered by the four four-year campuses of USC were: 1) the Associate Degree in Nursing (USC-Aiken, to be totally phased out by Fall 2005); 2) the Associate Degree in Nursing (USC-Upstate, to be totally phased out by Fall 2004); 3) the Associate in Arts degree in Beaufort's military locations by USC-Beaufort; and 4) the Associate in Arts degree (USC-Columbia at Fort Jackson.)

New associate degree programs (i.e., those implemented within the past three years) in the Technical College system have been excluded from this analysis. No new associate degree programs have been added at any of the USC two-year campuses or four-year campuses during the past three years. The likelihood that additional two-year programs will be opened at USC two-year branches is small, given the following: 1) USC increasingly views these campuses as part of a larger entity named Palmetto Colleges which works with USC-Columbia to deliver an array of programs; and 2) the Technical College System takes the position that, legally, it must approve all new two-year degree programs leading to immediate employment, not withstanding the charters of the USC two-year regional campuses.

General Analysis of the Programs of Study in the USC System

The AA/AS Degree Program at USC Two-year Regional Campus, USC-Beaufort, and USC-Columbia

All USC regional campuses designated as "two-year," as well as USC-Beaufort (approved for four-year status in September 2002 by the CHE), and USC-Columbia at Fort Jackson, offer the Associate of Arts/Associate of Science degree programs. USC-Beaufort's approval as a four-year institution originally had carried with it a proviso that the AA/AS would be eliminated simultaneously with the institution's initiation of four-year programming. However, in 2004, in response to demand from military officials and their dependents in Beaufort and USC-Beaufort's request to continue the program, the Commission approved amending this position for the benefit of that population.

In February 1998, in response to the requirements of Act 359 and to earlier concerns about the perceived inappropriateness of one of the state's three research institutions offering an associate degree, USC-Columbia requested and received approval to revise its mission statement so that its ongoing offering of the Associate of Arts degree program at Fort Jackson would be officially included in its mission. However, staff notes that given the very small size (see Table 1, page 4) of this program, it is certainly not germane to the central mission of the state's comprehensive research university; and, therefore, reiterates staff's long-term position that this program would more appropriately be offered by a two-year institution, such as USC-Sumter or Midlands Technical College. USC-Columbia already offers the BAIS program at Fort Jackson.

USC-Beaufort's continuation of the offering of the AA/AS degree presents a special case. According to the official enrollment data submitted by the USC System office, in Fall 2004 USC-Beaufort enrolled 77.4% of all its students by headcount (66.4% by FTE) as AA/AS students, even after two years of the institution's official transition to a four-year institution. In fact, however, this information was deemed to have been erroneous and is currently being revised. For this current report, accurate data exist for degree completions for 2004-2005. These demonstrate that while the number of AA/AS associate degree students is still the largest single category of degree recipients at the institution (N=56), baccalaureate degree recipients of all majors at the institution outnumbered the associate degree recipients in 2004-2005 (N=96.)

Over the past four years the numbers of graduates from the AA/AS programs in the University of South Carolina system have varied considerably as Table 1 shows. The self-reported data from the institution, corroborated by the CHEMIS staff at the Commission, shows that for 2003-2004 four of the six USC campuses offering the AA/AS program have experienced decreases in graduates for 2003-2004 over the 2002-2003 academic year. The two campuses experiencing increases in graduates are relatively small campuses. Thus, the total number of AA/AS recipients for the system has **decreased** 13.2% from 2002-03 to 2003-04, and **among the USC two-year campuses this percentage decline is even slightly higher (14.5%).**

Because data from the National Center for Education Statistics show that students who complete an AA/AS degree prior to transferring to a four-year institution are twice as likely to complete a B.A. or B.S. degree than those who do not, the two-year USC regional campuses should consider preparation of a master plan to increase the numbers of AA/AS degree recipients each year for the next decade. This suggestion was made in last year's report, but elicited no response from the University. Nevertheless, given the importance of creating an educated citizenry and workforce for South Carolina, and given the role of the USC two-year regional campuses as a significant entry point to higher education opportunities, the suggestion warrants repeating in this year's report. The actual graduation figures for the past four years at each two-year regional campus of USC are recorded below:

Table 1
USC-System AA/AS Program Graduates

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
4-Year:					
USC-Columbia (Ft. Jackson)	12	14	19	14	12
USC-Beaufort	87	63	72	79	73
SUB-TOTAL	**99**	**77**	**91**	**93**	**85**
2-Year:					
USC-Lancaster	74	86	96	81	69
USC-Salkehatchie	93	83	90	80	84
USC-Sumter	152	160	161	119	70
USC-Union	51	35	52	45	55
SUB-TOTAL	**370**	**364**	**399**	**325**	**278**
TOTAL	**469**	**441**	**490**	**418**	**363**

Source: USC annual reports on associate degree data

The power and importance of completion of the AA/AS degree as a springboard to the baccalaureate degree is underscored not only by national data, but also by data from South Carolina. Research reports from the Commission on Higher Education, the Palmetto Institute, and other contemporary assessments conclude that higher numbers of B.A. and B.S. recipients will be increasingly important to bring about and sustain economic and civic development in the state. Given the relatively low percentage (22.9% according to the Federal Census of 2000, which has increased to 24% in 2004, according to another source) of baccalaureate degree holders in the state's adult population, the USC public two-year campuses have a significant opportunity, challenge, and responsibility to increase the numbers of AA/AS degree completers and to prepare them for entry into a four-year program.

Applied, Occupationally-Specific Two-Year Degrees in the USC System

In 1997-1998, USC-Aiken and USC-Upstate had their mission statements changed by both the USC Board of Trustees and the CHE. This action was taken so that under the terms of Act 359, these campuses were to be permitted to continue to offer associate degree programs in nursing, despite the position taken over many years by staff that associate degrees are legitimate credentials with unique identities that should be offered by institutions designed to offer such degree programs rather than by four-year institutions whose missions are considerably different in intent. Subsequently, the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) was terminated at USC-Upstate at the end of Spring

Semester 2004 and at USC-Aiken at the end of Fall Semester 2005. In both cases, the neighboring technical colleges have taken over the responsibility for offering the ADN program.

Three of the four remaining two-year campuses of the USC System present another important challenge to the promotion of higher education opportunity in South Carolina, since these three campuses are found in communities in which no technical college is located nearby. The three campuses in question are USC-Lancaster, USC-Salkehatchie, and USC-Union. Of these three only USC-Lancaster offers occupationally-specific degree programs. Neither the authorizing legislation for these campuses nor Act 359 prohibits the offering of occupational degrees at two-year regional campuses of USC. The occupational programs at USC-Lancaster are nursing, criminal justice, and business. Graduates from the occupationally-specific two-year programs at USC-Lancaster, USC-Aiken, and USC-Upstate are listed below for 2003-04:

Table 2
USC System Graduates of Two-Year Occupationally-Specific Programs of Study
(Academic Year 2003-2004)

	Nursing	**Criminal Justice**	**Business**
USC-Aiken	56	---	---
USC-Lancaster	15	13	18
USC-Upstate	61	---	---

Last year's version of this annual report suggested including (or, in the case of Lancaster, increasing) two-year occupationally-related degree programs in the curricula of the three remaining two-year regional USC campuses located in communities where no technical college is located (i.e., Lancaster, Union, and Salkehatchie.) This suggestion was made as something which would support economic development in those communities. The State Technical College System response was that any new occupationally-oriented associate degree program had to be approved, by law, first by the State Technical College System's board. The University of South Carolina did not challenge the position of the State Tech Board and, therefore, has not acted since to approve an initiative for a program by USC-Lancaster to add a two-year early care and education program at the request of the Lancaster School District. Thus, the opportunity to provide associate degree programs either *through* the USC two-year regional campuses or *in association with* the Technical College System for their service areas has not been pursued.

This report simply notes the following facts: 1) occupationally-oriented associate degree programs of study are needed in the counties served by the remaining four two-year campuses of the University; 2) only one of those communities (i.e., Sumter) which is

served by a two-year USC regional campus is also served by a nearby technical college; 3) there is no need to establish a competing technical college in communities in which the remaining three USC two-year campuses are located; and 4) there is no reason why occupationally-oriented programs could not be established usefully (N.B.: Lancaster) on the other two-year USC regional campuses *if the USC system and the Technical College System were to cooperate*. Under the circumstances, a dialogue between the State Tech and USC systems should begin to establish a legal, functional, and administrative arrangement so that, in the three communities where a USC two-year regional campus exists in which there is no nearby technical college, residents can be served by technical degree programs which have long been available in other areas of the state to aid in the economic and civic development of their communities.

Summary of USC System Offerings in Associate Degrees

Graduation rates and student enrollment data for the current review period show that all the two-year programs in the USC system (AA/AS and occupational programs) are now meeting the productivity requirements for two-year programs, but the system is producing fewer graduates with these degrees than in the recent past. The three occupational programs at USC-Lancaster are producing relatively small numbers of graduates, which in part reflects the relatively sparse population of the area served.

The institutional decisions taken at USC-Upstate and USC-Aiken to cease to offer the associate degree in nursing have resulted in the transfer of these programs to neighboring technical colleges. Plans for enrollments and degree completions in the two new ADN programs at the technical colleges suggest that each of these area programs will produce more graduates than their predecessor programs had produced.

The University of South Carolina is pursuing a proposed "University College" concept and the technical college system places obvious emphasis on technical education programs. Nevertheless, neither of these mission reasons should preclude both systems from placing great efforts toward assuring higher enrollments and degree completions in the AA/AS degree. Both as a psychological landmark for individual students pursuing the eventual completion of a baccalaureate degree and as a statistical benchmark for state policymakers, the AA/AS has merit as a barometer of student progress toward the baccalaureate degree, as well as a springboard toward greater economic and civic development for the state as a community.

Finally, the State Technical College System and the University of South Carolina should enter into a dialogue to develop a cooperative agreement to provide career-oriented, technical associate degree programs in the three communities in which USC two-year regional campuses exist where there is no nearby technical college. The two systems should be encouraged to find a cooperative formula so that USC-Lancaster might

host more technical/career associate degree programs and USC-Union and USC-Salkehatchie might begin to host this kind of associate degree opportunity.

General Analysis of Associate Degree Programs in the Technical Colleges

A summary of the number of programs evaluated over the past 22 years in various categories at the technical colleges is found in **Table 6** of this report.

In the data for the current annual report, 22 (7.3%) programs of study out of a total of 303 which were analyzed at the technical colleges are on probation. By comparison, last year's report showed a total of 19 degree programs on probation; and the previous year 26 programs were on probation. For this reporting year, the programs on probation can be found in **Table 7** by degree and institution**.**

Engineering and Industrial Technology programs: Biggest numbers of Probationary Programs

For the first time in many years, last year's report showed a smaller number of Engineering Technology programs on probation (n=5) than the number of Industrial Technology programs on probation (n=7). The Engineering Technology programs on probation, nevertheless, still represented the second highest number of any program category. However, in this year's report Engineering Technology programs return to the top of the categorical list of programs on probation (N=10) with Industrial Technology programs second (N=7). Together these two categories of programs in the technical colleges account for 77.2% of all associate degree programs on probation. Fewer programs are on probation in Health (N=3) and Business (N=2).

Because the state's industries depend heavily on both Engineering Technology and Industrial Technology programs to prosper in manufacturing and high-tech sectors, probationary status of such programs—even for a year—is cause for concern for existing industries' interest and ability to expand and for potential new industries to be lured to the state. As this report stated last year, in an era when high tech development is the underpinning of a vibrant state economy, the Technical College System should consider development of a system plan to expand programs in both areas, but especially Engineering Technology.

It is to be noted that the State Technical College System included in its report to the Commission this year a short analysis of initiatives which have been undertaken to address the small numbers of students in these important programs. These initiatives may be accurately summarized as follows: 1) elimination of excess course credits from some programs; 2) consolidation of programs which are very similar in curricular requirements; 3) efforts to provide incentives to major in Engineering Technology in a

technical college by recruiting high school students to take engineering technology coursework (or pre-engineering technology prerequisites) while still in high school and receive dual credit for these courses.

These initiatives are commendable, but stop short of Commission's suggestion in last year's report that the State Technical College System develop a comprehensive system plan for recruitment and retention in Engineering Technology. While some important initiatives are currently being undertaken by technical colleges, only one--Project Lead the Way--focuses on well-prepared high school students. However, Project Lead the Way is focused mostly on students whose goal is a degree in Engineering rather than Engineering Technology. Thus, a comprehensive plan appears still to be useful to address Engineering Technology. Such a plan should address two issues: 1) the strengthening of academic preparation in math and science for those high school students who could benefit from such programs (so that drop-out rates be minimized); and 2) the implementation of proactive recruitment and retention programs to enhance the numbers of underrepresented math- and science-prepared women and minorities in these programs.

The workforce of today already is considerably more "gendergrated" and racially/ethnically integrated than ever before. The workforce of tomorrow will demand even higher levels of both of these values. South Carolina must be ready on a continuing basis to meet that challenge. Studies such as the CHE's path-breaking *Foundations for the Future* report and reports from groups such as The Palmetto Institute have unfailingly commented on the close relationship between increasing enrollments and graduation rates in technical and industrial degree programs and attracting information-based and "smart manufacturing-based" industries.

Since "career laddering" for bright, motivated employees is a part of the attraction of industries to our state, a system plan of the Technical College System should address developing articulation agreements with those four public institutions which offer either a four-year bachelor of management of technology program or a four-year completion program in a bachelor of engineering technology. If it is to be workable, such a plan must involve a cooperative dialogue between the Technical College System and four-year public institutions in South Carolina which have baccalaureate degree programs in either Engineering Technology, the management of Engineering Technology, or Engineering. In the past, the Technical College System has reported that recruiting well-prepared high school students into the associate degree programs in Engineering Technology has faced the barrier of parental perceptions that these programs are "dead-end" careers which do not lead to increased salaries, increased job responsibilities, or promotion in the workplace. To have statewide articulation agreements from the technical colleges to four-year institutions in fields that are engineering technology-related would do much to dispel such an objection by establishing seamless transitions.

In summary, the Technical College System has both an opportunity to recruit students from high school and a responsibility to promote transfer of their engineering technology students to a four-year completion degree in this field. The Technical College System should be thanked for its initiatives in studying questions related to Engineering Technology over the past year and encouraged to develop a system plan in cooperation and dialogue with public four-year institutions with engineering technology-related programs to which associate degree graduates in the field of engineering technology can transfer with ease. Especially given the responsibility of higher education for economic development efforts of the state as found in the provisions of the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005, the State Technical College System, the relevant four-year public institutions, and the Commission itself should be attentive to this need and conclude a set of workable agreements before next year's report is due.

Continuing Success of the AA/AS Programs in the Technical Colleges

The AA/AS is the transfer degree program in the public two-year institutions which has as its sole reason for existence the preparation of students for transfer into baccalaureate programs. In South Carolina, AA/AS programs were begun in the 1970s in response to the needs of persons who for reasons of finance, geography, and/or historical underrepresentation in higher education (especially mature students, women, and minorities) found it much more possible to begin a baccalaureate degree program by taking the first two years of coursework at a technical college.

In 1998, for the first time, the nine technical colleges with the most recently approved AA/AS programs had their programs reviewed for productivity. Only in the reports of 1998, 2001, and 2002 (and, in the latter two reports, only on a technicality) did one of the 16 technical colleges fail to meet the productivity standards for the AA/AS.

For this reporting year, **all** AA/AS programs in the Technical College System are in the "good" category. However, the AA/AS program at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College appears somewhat anomalous between its enrollments and its graduates. As an institution, Orangeburg-Calhoun is the eleventh largest of the 16 technical colleges. In recent years, it has had robust enrollments in the AA/AS program(e.g., Fall 2002=99; Fall 2003=101; Fall 2004=92; Fall 2005=141), but in the past three years it has graduated fewer students (N=25; three-year average=8.33) than several smaller institutions in the system, including the smallest technical college in the system (N=33; three-year average=11). Especially in the period of the EEDA legislation, these data suggest that the Orangeburg region could benefit by the College's development of a plan with measurable goals focused on graduating and transferring larger numbers of AA/AS students.

Table 3

Technical College System AA/AS Graduates:
By Year (2004, 2003, 2002 Academic Years) and Institution

	2004	2003	2002
Aiken Tech	26	28	31
CentralCTC	36	31	28
Denmark Tech	45	20	22
Flo-Darl Tech	76	56	58
GreenvilleTech	177	155	136
Horry-GtwnTech	73	66	71
MTC	223	228	200
NETC	30	18	24
OCTC	5	11	9
PTC	79	54	52
SpartbgTech	79	61	42
Tech Col L'Ctry	12	13	16
Tri-Cty Tech	73	54	66
TridentTech	315	378	328
WmsbrgTech	12	8	13
YorkTech	26	29	21
TOTAL	**1287**	**1206**	**1117**

In summary, the AA/AS programs in the Technical College System have been a great success in opening up the possibilities of a four-year degree to many South Carolinians. The data for 2003-2004 show that there was a 6.7% increase of graduates in the AA/AS programs of the Technical College system over the graduations for 2002-2003. Similarly, there had been an 8% increase of graduates in 2002-03 over the previous year. These data suggest that students are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of earning a degree from the technical colleges before transferring into a four-year institution's baccalaureate program. Increasing the number of sections and offerings in this degree program, together with sound counseling for students in every institution in the system, will promote increased completion of the baccalaureate degree that national studies have shown result when transfer students have first earned an AA/AS degree.

A review of catalogs and semester course schedules in the technical colleges continues to suggest that more frequent scheduling of courses and more course choices by technical colleges would contribute to faster time to degree and more graduates of these programs. Some of the technical colleges have been successfully using distance education offerings for this degree. In at least two of the technical colleges, 100% of the

AA/AS can be completed by distance education. The Technical College System offers courses system-wide through "Tech On-Line, " individual courses in an interactive mode, and courses offered over the internet. The latter, in particular, have demonstrated considerable appeal. According to State Technical College System figures, the internet-based courses constituted 10,872 unduplicated enrollments of a total of 15,964 updduplicated enrollments by distance education during Fall 2004. While this is commendable as a mechanism for increasing access to higher education, recent longitudinal studies from the National Council for Education Statistics (NCES) show that real-time, face-to-face classroom sections continue to be preferred by approximately one-third of all students as a desirable alternative to distance education-delivered coursework.

The Importance of the Associate Degree Nursing Programs

For the past several years, this report has pointed out two issues associated with the nursing profession. The first of these is an issue of professional identity, centered on the question of whether the associate or baccalaureate degree should be required for entry-level as a professional nurse, i.e., "Registered Nurse" (R.N.) Thus far, the South Carolina labor market has found both degrees desirable for initial employment and, in many employment settings, virtually indistinguishable in duties and in compensation. The associate degree-prepared graduates in South Carolina, as in many other states, account for about two-thirds of all first-time nursing graduates eligible to take the NCLEX examination to practice as Registered Nurses.

The second issue is the current nursing shortage said to be confronting the profession. There are many reasons for this shortage, including a perception of professional reticence to open doors in nursing on a continuing basis to men and minorities; a large and growing number of late-middle-aged nurses preparing to retire; and an inability to attract as large a pool of female students following graduation from high school immediately into the profession as historically has been the case. To relieve the shortage in the fastest time possible will require sustained commitment to enroll and graduate increasingly larger numbers of nurses annually. Historically, the associate degree programs have been leaders on this front.

Two years ago, the report on the graduates of the technical college's eleven Associate Degree in Nursing programs for that reporting year (2001-2002) showed a *decrease* of 3.6% over the previous year's graduation numbers. Last year's report (2002-2003) showed a 6% *increase* of graduates from the 11 programs over the 2001-2002 academic year. This year's report (2003-2004) is even more encouraging with an *increase of 22.7% over 2002-2003* (See Table 4). The Technical College System and its constituent nursing programs are to be congratulated on their ability to increase graduations so quickly in this vital area of healthcare.

Owing to the closing of the USC-Upstate and USC-Aiken programs, within two years' time the USC-Lancaster ADN program will be the sole associate degree in nursing in the state outside the technical college system; and, by that time, two more such programs will be reporting from the technical colleges (i.e., Spartanburg Technical College and Aiken Technical College). Both new technical college programs are planning to enroll larger numbers of students than their predecessors did in the past. In addition, existing technical college associate degree programs are enrolling more students than they did in the mid- and late-1990s. Thus, to the extent that the nursing shortage might still be an issue, it cannot be attributed to lack of response to the need for new nurses from the technical colleges' programs.

Table 4
Total Number of Graduates from Technical Colleges' Associate Degree in Nursing Programs for Years 1999-2000 through 2002-2003

1999-2000	580
2000-2001	725
2001-2002	706
2002-2003	748
2003-2004	**918**

Degree Programs No Longer on Probation

For the current reporting year, a total of 11 programs which had been on probation in the technical colleges for last year's reporting period have been recommended by the State Technical College System for placement in good standing. In this group there were three programs in Industrial Technology and two programs each were in Business, Engineering Technology, and Public Service. One program each was found in Computer Technology and Health Technology. The single Health Technology program (a major in Physical Therapy Assistant) was designated by the State Technical College System as "Good-Justified" after a review of information that did, indeed, justify this change. The degrees and institutional locales of all the programs moving from Probation to Good are found here in Table 5.

Table 5
Degree Programs Returning to
"Good" Status from "Probation" 2003-2004

Change all these below

College	Degree	Program
Greenville Technical College	BUS	Supply Chain Management
Technical College of the Lowcountry	BUS	Office Systems Technology
Tri-County Technical College	COM	Computer Technology
Trident Technical College	HEA	Physical Therapy Assistant*
Midlands Technical College	IND	Automotive Technology
Horry-Georgetown Technical College	ENGR	Electronics Engineering Technology
Piedmont Technical College	ENGR	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Northeastern Technical College	IND	Industrial Electronics Technology
Trident Technical College	IND	Machine Tool Technology
Aiken Technical College	PSER	Criminal Justice Technology
Technical College of the Lowcountry	PSER	Criminal Justice Technology

*Designated "Good-Justified" by the State Technical College System

Tabular Analysis of Associate Degree Programs

The following tables provide a succinct quantitative analysis of the programs of the technical colleges for this period.

Table 6
Twenty-two Year Summary
Annual Associate Degree Program Evaluation
In the Technical Colleges

Year Evaluated	Good Standing	On Probation	Under Suspension	Cancelled	Total
1983	198	30	10	12	250
1984	206	33	2	9	250
1985	214	16	17	9	256
1986	212	30	11	9	262
1987	216	29	11	6	262
1988	204	44	15	4	267
1989	215	41	13	5	274
1990	254	44	12	8	318
1991	244	46	6	10	306
1992	251	36	11	4	302
1993	247	36	16	1	300
1994	260	31	16	5	312
1995	275	35	5	5	320
1996	267	25	14	6	312
1997	262	29	11	6	308
1998	270	18	9	7	304
1999	261	31	7	2	301
2000	264	30	7	5	306
2001	269	22	9	7	307
2002	294	26	10	2	332
2003	297	19	14	1	331
2004	**265**	**22**	**11**	**5**	**303**

Table 7
Associate Degree Programs on Probation
in Fall 2004

College	Degree	Program
Northeastern Tech	BUS	Office Systems Technology
Williamsburg Tech	BUS	Office Systems Technology
Tri-County Tech	IND	Radio and TV Broadcasting
Florence-Darlington Tech	HEA	Medical Laboratory Technology
Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech	HEA	Respiratory Care
Trident Technical College	HEA	Occupational Therapy Assistant
Trident Technical College	IND	Aircraft Maintenance Technology
Florence-Darlington Tech	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Spartanburg Technical College	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
York Technical College	IND	Automotive Technology
Midlands Technical College	ENGR	Civil Engineering Technology
Central Carolina Tech	ENGR	Civil Engineering Technology
Trident Technical College	ENGR	Civil Engineering Technology
Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech	ENGR	Electronics Engineering Technology
Tri-County Technical College	ENGR	Electronics Engineering Technology
Denmark Technical College	ENGR	Electro-mechanical Engr. Technology
Trident Technical College	ENGR	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Tech College of Lowcountry	IND	Building Construction Technology
Denmark Technical College	IND	Electronics Technology
Aiken Technical College	IND	Machine Tool Technology
Florence-Darlington Tech	IND	Heat, Vent, AirConditioning Technology
Midlands Technical College	ENGR	Engineering Design Technology

Table 8

Associate Degree Programs On Suspension in 2004 (or Continued for 2nd or 3rd Year Suspension)

College	Degree	Program
First Year:		
Aiken Technical College	ENGR	Computer Engineering Technology
Greenville Technical College	IND	Computer Electronics Technology
Second Year:		
Central Carolina Tech	BUS	Marketing
Midlands Tech	HEA	Pharmacy Tech
Central Carolina Tech	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Aiken Technical College	ENGR	Electro-mechanical Engr Technology
Spartanburg Tech	PSER	Interpreting
Third Year:		
Midlands Tech	BUS	Court Reporting
Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Midlands Tech	ENGR	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Greenville Technical College	ENGR	Environmental Health & Safety Mgt

Table 9
Associate Degrees Cancelled In Fall 2003

College	Degree	Program
Midlands Technical College	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Aiken Technical College	ENGR	Nuclear Engineering Technology
Greenville Technical College	IND	Industrial Electronics Technology
Horry-Georgetown Tech	IND	Machine Tool Technology
Spartanburg Technical College	IND	Heat, Vent, AC Technology

Summary

All 11 of the associate degree programs in the University of South Carolina system and 265 (87.5 %) of the 303 technical college programs evaluated for this report meet the "good" status requirements for this reporting year.

It is encouraging to see the numerical and percentage growth in recent years of the graduates of the Technical College System's ADN nursing programs. If this trend can be sustained for the next ten years, it should do much to alleviate—if not remove for the time being—the perception of unmet demand for Registered Nurses. To know when the numbers of nursing graduates eligible to become Registered Nurses is approaching a satisfactory number to meet demand, South Carolina and the country need to have much more data than is currently available to measure demand. This is especially true in hospitals which continue to employ approximately two-thirds of all Registered Nurses in South Carolina.

As the chief vehicle for potentially seamless transition from associate to baccalaureate degree program transfer, the AA/AS programs in the state's public two-year institutions are critical in efforts to meet South Carolina's needs for an increasingly baccalaureate-educated citizenry in order to attract economic development. Although both the technical colleges and the USC regional two-year campuses have sufficient enrollments in these programs, more is needed to retain and graduate larger numbers and percentages of students from the AA/AS program for purposes of transfer into baccalaureate programs within the state.

Finally, because of their importance to attracting and retaining industry and their ability to provide individuals with economic advancement, programs in engineering technology should be the subject of a system plan of the State Technical College System to recruit and retain larger numbers of academically prepared students who are diverse in gender and ethnicity.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommends that the Commission grant this report's designation of programs for the current reporting year as shown in **Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.**

- The Committee recommends that the Commission request the Technical College System and two-year regional USC campuses be requested to develop plans for both their systems and individual institutions to address **increasing** enrollments and degree completions in AA/AS programs, as well as transfer to four-year institutions from the AA/AS transfer programs.

- The Committee recommends that the Commission request that the State Technical College system develop a system plan for Engineering Technology programs for improving academic preparation for these programs among new students; recruitment and retention of students through graduation; and transfer of graduates to related in-state four-year programs of study; and

- The Committee recommends that the Commission request that the State Technical College System and the USC two-year Regional Campuses be requested to develop a cooperative and comprehensive statewide plan to offer some non-duplicative, occupationally-related associate degree programs at USC-Lancaster, USC-Salkehatchie, and USC-Union as work-force and economic development needs suggest would be appropriate.